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Malcolm X Speaks in the Era of Trump

As we commemorate our Black Revolutionary Hero, Malcolm X, we as a people best honor him by keeping his revolutionary teachings as core principles of our persistent march to liberation.

Therefore, as we enter this era of a Donald Trump presidency, Malcolm X's words keep us on point in exposing the racist, exploitative and fascist foundation of the U.S. empire and our battle for unity and self-determination.

*The Ballot or the Bullet [Excerpts]
by Malcolm X
April 3, 1964
Cleveland, Ohio*

No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver -- no, not I. I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare...

"How can you thank a man for giving you what's already yours? How then can you thank him for giving you only part of what's already yours? You haven't even

made progress, if what's being given to you, you should have had already. That's not progress...

Our mothers and fathers invested sweat and blood. Three hundred and ten years we worked in this country without a dime in return -- I mean without a dime in return. You let the white man walk around here talking about how rich this country is, but you never stop to think how it got rich so quick. It got rich because you made it rich....

You take the people who are in this audience right now. They're poor. We're all poor as individuals. Our weekly salary individually amounts to hardly anything. But if you take the salary of everyone in here collectively, it'll fill up a whole lot of baskets. It's a lot of wealth. If you can collect the wages of just these people right here for a year, you'll be rich -- richer than rich. When you look at it like that, think how rich Uncle Sam had to become, not with this handful, but millions of black people. Your and my mother and father, who didn't work an eight-hour shift, but worked from "can't see" in the morning until "can't see" at night, and worked for nothing, making the white man rich, making Uncle Sam rich. This is our investment. This is our contribution, our blood...

We need to expand the civil-rights struggle to a higher level -- to the level of human rights. Whenever you are in a civil-rights struggle, whether you know it or not, you are confining yourself to the jurisdiction of Uncle

Sam. No one from the outside world can speak out in your behalf as long as your struggle is a civil-rights struggle. Civil rights comes within the domestic affairs of this country. All of our African brothers and our Asian brothers and our Latin-American brothers cannot open their mouths and interfere in the domestic affairs of the United States. And as long as it's civil rights, this comes under the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam...

When you expand the civil-rights struggle to the level of human rights, you can then take the case of the black man in this country before the nations in the UN. You can take it before the General Assembly. You can take Uncle Sam before a world court. But the only level you can do it on is the level of human rights. Civil rights keeps you under his restrictions, under his jurisdiction. Civil rights keeps you in his pocket. Civil rights means you're asking Uncle Sam to treat you right. Human rights are something you were born with. Human rights are your God-given rights. Human rights are the rights that are recognized by all nations of this earth. And any time any one violates your human rights, you can take them to the world court...

Uncle Sam's hands are dripping with blood, dripping with the blood of the black man in this country. He's the earth's number-one hypocrite. He has the audacity -- yes, he has -- imagine him posing as the leader of the free world. The free world! And you over here singing "We Shall Overcome." Expand the civil-rights struggle to the level of human rights. Take it into the United Nations, where our African brothers can throw their weight on our side, where our Asian brothers can throw their weight on our side, where our Latin-American brothers can throw their weight on our side, and where 800 million Chinamen are sitting there waiting to throw their weight on our side...

Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)

[Excerpts] Founding Speech by Malcolm X

June 28, 1964

Audubon Ballroom, New York City



So we have formed an organization known as the Organization of Afro American Unity which has the same aim and objective -- to fight whoever gets in our way, to bring about the complete independence of people of African descent here in the Western Hemisphere, and first here in the United States, and bring about the freedom of these people by any means necessary. That's our motto. We want freedom by any means necessary...

"The Organization of Afro American Unity shall include all people of African descent in the Western Hemisphere, as well as our brothers and sisters on the African continent." Which means anyone of African descent, with African blood, can become a member of

the Organization of Afro American Unity, and also any one of our brothers and sisters from the African continent. Because not only it is an organization of Afro American unity meaning that we are trying to unite our people in the West, but it's an organization of Afro American unity in the sense that we want to unite all of our people who are in North America, South America, and Central America with our people on the African continent. We must unite together in order to go forward together. Africa will not go forward any faster than we will and we will not go forward any faster than Africa will. We have one destiny and we've had one past...

Tactics based solely on morality can only succeed when you are dealing with people who are moral or a system that is moral. A man or system which oppresses a man because of his color is not moral. It is the duty of every Afro-American person and every Afro-American community throughout this country to protect its people against mass murderers, against bombers, against lynchers, against floggers, against brutalizers and against exploiters...

Education is an important element in the struggle for human rights. It is the means to help our children and our people rediscover their identity and thereby increase their self respect. Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs only to the people who prepare for it today...

Basically, there are two kinds of power that count in America: economic power and political power, with social power being derived from those two. In order for the Afro-Americans to control their destiny, they must be able to control and affect the decisions which control their destiny: economic, political, and social. This can only be done through organization...

This organization is responsible only to the Afro-American people and the Afro-American community...

This organization is not responsible to anybody but us. We don't have to ask the man downtown can we demonstrate. We don't have to ask the man downtown what tactics we can use to demonstrate our resentment against his criminal abuse. We don't have to ask his consent; we don't have to ask his endorsement; we don't have to ask his permission. Anytime we know that an unjust condition exists and it is illegal and unjust, we will strike at it by any means necessary. And strike also at whatever and whoever gets in the way...

Armed with the knowledge of our past, we can with confidence charter a course for our future. Culture is an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle. We must take hold of it and forge the future with the past." And to quote a passage from "Then We Heard the Thunder" by John Killens, it says: "He was a dedicated patriot: Dignity was his country, Manhood was his government, and Freedom was his land... Old John Killens.